

MORE UNITED STATES TREE SWALLOW RECOVERIES

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Here we report five recent Tree Swallow band encounters. Two swallows had flights between the Alberta foothills and California. A third flew east and was mist-netted in Michigan. We also report the second occasion in which two Tree Swallows, banded in different places on the Canadian prairies, were recovered at the same location in southern Louisiana (the first such occasion² is reproduced as numbers 1 and 2 in Table 1 and Figure 1).

Our previous reports of Tree Swallows banded in Alberta and Saskatchewan showed that this species follows a southeasterly route, with the most distant recoveries reaching South Carolina, Georgia, Mississippi and Louisiana. While a few may stay along the southern Atlantic and Gulf coasts for the winter, most are believed to migrate farther south, to Central America and Cuba during December, January and February, returning to the southern United States by March.⁵

California

Ray Harris caught an adult female Tree Swallow in one of his bluebird houses in the Porcupine Hills north of Pincher Creek, Alberta, on July 7, 1999. It had been banded 1050 km distant at the Modoc National Wildlife Refuge (NWR) near Alturas in northeastern California, on May 3, 1998.¹ Traveling the opposite direction, a nestling banded by George Loades on his Jumping Pound trail southwest of Cochrane, AB, on July 8, 1995, was mist-netted 1175 km distant at Modoc NWR on April 12, 1997.⁴

The Modoc NWR banding was part of the MAPS (Monitoring Avian Productivity and Survivorship) project, opening mist nets

at set time intervals. Since most of the Modoc Tree Swallows raise their young in nestboxes at the site, the presence of migrant swallows coming from and going to southern Alberta was a surprise.

Michigan

A nestling banded near Dundurn, SK, on July 2, 2000 (MIH), was mist-netted 1660 km east-southeast at Vermilion Station, MI, by T. Allen of the Department of Biology at Superior University, on June 17, 2002.

The Vermilion Station is just west of the Whitefish Point banding station, which captures birds, including many raptors, as they cross a narrow part of Lake Superior, west of Sault Ste Marie. The only previous record of a Tree Swallow traveling mainly eastwards was a nestling from the Edmonton area recaptured four years later nesting in Wisconsin.²

Louisiana

Two nestling Tree Swallows were banded four years apart at the same latitude on bluebird trails: one near Olds, AB, on July 4, 1997 (DJS), and one near Pike Lake, SK, on June 25, 2001 (MIH). Both were found dead near Lake Charles, LA, on March 10, 2002, at a distance of 2960 and 2650 km, respectively. John Robinette, a Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries official, provided the following details:

“Jerry Baker, 1022 Franklin Road, Lake Charles, found a group of around twenty birds, two of which were banded, near his home, on the morning of March 10. He picked up five of the dead birds, including the two with bands, and brought them to my office for identification. They seemed to

have frozen to death during the sudden change in temperature during the night, from the mid-fifties F (about 13 C), to below freezing. This event followed a very mild winter.”

Coupled with the Nebraska weather death (#4 in Table 1),³ it provides evidence that swallow migration is both precarious and severely impacted by weather.

1. HARRIS, R. 2000. From the President. *Bluebird* 22(2):2.

2. STILES, D.J., and M.I. HOUSTON. 1994. Distant travels of Tree Swallows of the Prairie Provinces, 1968-1992. *Blue Jay* 52:206-212.

3. STILES, D.J. 1997. Recoveries of Mountain Bluebirds south of 49° latitude, and a recent Tree Swallow. *Blue Jay* 55:48-52.

4. STILES, D.J. 1998. Interprovincial recoveries of Mountain Bluebirds and Tree Swallows, and a California recovery of a Tree Swallow. *Blue Jay* 56:156-159.

5. ROBERTSON, R.J., B.J. STUTCHBURY, and R.R. COHEN. Tree Swallow, *In The Birds of North America*, No. 11 (A. Poole, P. Stettenheim, and F. Gill, Eds.). Philadelphia: The Academy of Natural Sciences; Washington, DC: The American Ornithologists' Union.



Where banded in Alberta and Saskatchewan

No. Bander	Band No.	Age*	Latitude deg min	Longitude deg min	Location	Date Y M D
1	M.I.Houston	2021-67115 L	51 40	106 20	Blackstrap L, SK	89/07/03
2	D.J. Stiles	2010-91554 L	51 40	113 40	Didsbury, AB	88/06/25
3	D.J. Stiles	2031-62019 AHY F	51 20	114 20	Cochrane, AB	90/06/30
4	D.J. Stiles	2151-38482 L	50 40	114 00	DeWinton, AB	95/07/10
5	D.J. Stiles	2121-85793 L	51 00	114 50	Jumping Pound, AB	95/07/08
6	Modoc NWR	2151-30038 AHY F	41 20	120 30	Alturus, CA	98/05/03
7	D.J. Stiles	3121-35381 L	51 50	113 50	Olds, AB	97/07/04
8	M.I.Houston	1651-15937 L	51 50	106 40	Pike Lake, SK	01/06/25
9	M.I.Houston	1671-60572 L	51 40	106 20	Dundurn, SK	00/07/02

Nos. 2, 3, 4, 5 & 7 above Banded in Calgary area and recovered in USA
 No. 6 above Banded in California and recovered in southwestern Alberta
 Nos. 1 & 8 above Banded in Saskatoon area and recovered in Louisiana
 No. 9 above Banded in Saskatoon area and recovered in Michigan

*Age: L - Local, unable to fly (nestling); AHY F - After Hatch Year, Female NWR - National Wildlife Refuge

**How Codes: 01 - shot; 09 - killed by owl; 15 - killed by weather; 39 - killed by airplane; 89 - trapped and released

Where recovered/encountered in the United States

Latitude deg min	Longitude deg min	Location	Date Y M D	How**	Distance (km)
Recoveries, 1989 - 1995					
30 10	93 00	Lake Charles, LA	89/12/18	39	2635
29 40	92 40	Grand Chenier, LA	91/08/23	09	3000
45 10	97 30	Webster, SD	92/07/28	01	1420
41 40	102 20	Crescent Lk, NE	95/09/22	15	1345
California encounter and California banding, 1997 - 1999					
41 20	120 30	Alturus, CA	97/04/12	89	1175
49 40	113 50	Pincher Creek, AB	99/07/07	89	1050
Louisiana recoveries, 2002					
30 10	93 10	Lake Charles, LA	02/03/10	15	2960
30 10	93 10	Lake Charles, LA	02/03/10	15	2650
Michigan mistnet encounter, 2002					
46 40	85 00	Whitefish Pt, MI	02/06/17	89	1660

Table 1. Selected Tree Swallow Recoveries, listed chronologically by date of recovery